

2. Check the allotment rolls for your ancestor in each agency you are researching. These are available in the Archives. If you find your ancestor listed on the roll it will have a description of their allotment which you need to copy. The agency rolls may be listed by the tribal name or by the agency.

Once the information above is located, the Archives can direct you in the next step in tracing your Native American ancestor.

### RESOURCES

There are innumerable resources available for researching your family roots. Below are just a few to get you started.

#### *Archive Resources*

1. \*\*\*"Native American Records. The collection contains 3.5 million documents and 6,000 volumes representing 66 of the 67 native tribes that reside in Indian Territory. (Osage records can be found at the Southwest Branch of the National Archives in Ft. Worth, TX). Other resources include the 112-volume Indian-Pioneer History, a collection of oral histories done by the Federal Writers Project in 1937."

2. **Indian Confederate Records and Union Muster Rolls.**

3. **Indian Archives Index.** Section "X" Vertical files include genealogies, biography files, information on Indian Territory and Oklahoma Territory.

\*\* "Section X, the Archives' vertical files, contains news clippings, information on Native Americans and pioneers, and more."

4. **Oral Interviews 1937-1938** and oral histories (written, oral, and video).

\*\* "Oral histories include many subjects and individuals with over 5,000 interviews and

recorded events. Extensive indexes are provided by name."

5. **Manuscript collections.**

\*\* "These represent unpublished collections of public and private papers, scrapbooks, business records, collections of scholars, and more. Guides to collections and limited indexes are available."

6. **Photography collections.**

\*\* "The Photographic section contains 720,000 images that range from the late 1850's to the present with many subjects represented."

7. **Numerous old maps.**

8. **Newspaper archives** from state and tribal sources.

\*\* "The Newspaper collection contains 28,000 reels of microfilm on state newspapers from 1844 to the present. Some indexing is available. Newspapers often are a good source for marriage and death notices."

\*\* Oklahoma Historical Society Brochure, "A Guide to the Research Library and Archives."

\*\*\* Information per interview with Phyllis Adams 522-5209 OHS Archives.

**Oklahoma Indian Legal Services, Inc.** would like to thank Donna Jones for her donation of time and research expertise which has made this brochure possible.



# Tracing Your Indian Roots

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## INTRODUCTION

Tracing your indian roots can be challenging whether you're hoping to gain tribal membership or to fill in your family tree. There are many roads you will have to take, literally and figuratively, but if you have the patience it will be rewarding.

Before you begin you will need to be familiar with a few terms. Listed below are just some that you will encounter quite frequently.

- **HENDERSON ROLL:** This is a Census Roll of Cherokee Indians East of the Mississippi for 1835. It is very difficult to read but there is an Index Available.
- **DAWES ROLL:** This is a tribal membership roll created by Congress for each of the Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw, Creek, and Seminole tribes. The Roll was closed in 1907 with over 101,000 names but in 1914 Congress added 312 more members. If you are looking for an ancestor from one of these tribes, you must find them on the Dawes Final Roll to gain tribal membership.
- **GUION MILLER ROLLS:** This roll was completed in 1910 and lists those who were Eastern Cherokee during the Treaties of 1835-36 and 1845 or their descendants.
- **U.S. FEDERAL CENSUS:** The United States began taking a census in ten year increments in the year 1790. The Census Records for 1790-1850, however, did not include a category for Indians. For an Indian to be listed during those years they had to have been living in a white or black settlement and even then they would have been listed as white or black. In 1860 Indians were included in the

Census but only if they paid taxes. In 1870 non-tax paying Indians were added but it wasn't until 1890 that anyone living on a reservation was added to the Census. Unfortunately, the entire 1890 Census was destroyed by fire so 1900 is the first real Census to include Indians both on and off the reservation.

- **AGENCY ROLLS:** Various reservation agents throughout the country created membership rolls for the tribes in their areas.

## BEGINNING YOUR SEARCH

To begin your search you will need to make a list of all the names of your birth family. Begin with yourself and work back listing your parents and each of their parents and so on. When you have listed every generation you can remember start asking everyone in your family if they can fill in any names you don't have on your list. Include any nicknames or Indian names as well. As you make your list write down where that person was born, died, is buried or where they lived at specific times.

In your search you will most likely need to do research at the Oklahoma Historical Society's Archives. Below is a list of information that they will need to assist. Since their only location is in Oklahoma City, and they are not able to do your research for you, you may have to do some traveling. It is important to make time in your schedule to be prepared when you arrive.

### *\*\*\*Searching the Five Tribes*

1. Which family member was Native American or living with a tribe in Indian Territory during 1900? With which tribe did he/she live?

In order for a person to apply for the Dawes Roll he/she had to physically live with the

tribe on tribal land. If your ancestor lived outside of the tribal area during enrollment, then he/she did not qualify for enrollment. If you have another family member who is on a tribal roll, such as an aunt or uncle, verify his/her parents names and birth places. While his/her information may not help you get on the tribal rolls it may help to fill in names or information that you did not have.

If you found your ancestor on the 1900 U.S. Census (available in the Oklahoma Historical Society's Research Library) and he/she is listed as being white, then 99% of the time he/she will not have been enrolled in a tribe.

If you found your ancestor lived in Indian Territory during 1900 then they may be listed on the 1900 Indian Territory Census-Indian Schedule located on the first floor in the Research Library.

2. The Oklahoma Historical Society's Research Library and Archives have copies of the final Dawes Roll for the Five Tribes. Once you have the name or names of your ancestors you believe to be Native American you can look them up in the final rolls. Always cross check other tribal rolls. Sometimes a person may have inadvertently ended up on a roll for the tribe that their spouse belonged to or the roll for a tribe which lived nearby.

3. If you find your ancestor on a Dawes Roll then you need to get a copy of their enrollment card. The Oklahoma Historical Society's Research Library and Archives has the Dawes Rolls as well as the Southwest Branch of the National Archives in Ft. Worth, Texas.

### *\*\*\*Plains and Woodland Tribes*

1. Check the 1900 U.S. Census (Oklahoma Historical Society's Research Library) for your ancestor.